

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KATHMA 02054 181126Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 181030Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8328
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, NP
SUBJECT: MAJOR CABINET SHIFTS

REF: KATHMANDU 2033

1. THE KING MAY 17 MADE SEVERAL MAJOR SHIFTS IN THE CABINET OF
PRIME MINISTER TULSI GIRI.

2. THE NEW CABINET IS AS FOLLOWS:

MINISTERS
FOOD, AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND IRRIGATION-RABINDRA NATH SHARMA
(SHIFTED FROM LAW AND JUSTICE)
LAW AND JUSTICE - JOG MEHAR SHRESTHA (NEW)
COMMUNICATIONS - HARI BAHADUR BASNET (NEW)
FINANCE - DR. BHEKH BAHADUR THAPA
INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE - PITAMBAR DHOJ KHATI (SHIFTED FROM HEALTH)
PALACE AFFAIRS, DEFENSE - DR. TULSI GIRI
FOREIGN AFFAIRS - KRISHNA RAJ ARYAL
HOME, PANCHAYAT - BHOJ RAJ GHIMERE

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PAGE 02 KATHMA 02054 181126Z

MINISTERS OF STATE
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION - BALARAM GHARTI MAGAR (SHIFTED FROM
WORKS, TRANSPORT)
HEALTH - PADMA SUNDAR LAWATI (NEW)
TOURISM, WORKS AND TRANSPORT - DR. HARKA BAHADUR GURUNG (SHIFTED
FROM INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND EDUCATION)
EDUCATION - PASHUPATI S.J.B. RANA (NEW)

WATER AND POWER - HARISH CHANDRA MAHAT
FORESTS - BHOLA NATH JHA

ASSISTANT MINISTERS
HOME, PANCHAYAT - DAMBAR BAHADUR MALLA (SHIFTED FROM FOOD,
AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION)
FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION - GOPALCHANDRA SINGH RAJBAMSI
(NEW)
WATER AND POWER - SAMSUL HUQ
LAND REFORMS - MARICH MAN SINGH
WORKS AND TRANSPORT - LABARU RANA THARU
FORESTS - BHIM PRASAD GAUCHEN
EDUCATION - HIRA LAL VISHWAKARMA
HOME AND PANCHAYAT - DILLISHER RAI (TWO ASSISTANT MINISTERS
IN HOME)

3. ONLY PASHUPATI S.J.B. RANA AND GOPALCHANDRA SINGH RAJBAMSI
ARE COMPLETELY NEW FACES IN THE CABINET RANKS. JOG MEHAR
SHRESTHA HAD AT VARIOUS TIMES SERVED AS MINISTER FOR HOME, PANCHAYAT
AS WELL AS EDUCATION, LAW AND JUSTICE IN PREVIOUS MINISTRIES.
SHRESTHA IS A FORMER MEMBER OF THE NEPALI CONGRESS PARTY AND HAS
BEEN ACTIVE IN A NUMBER OF PRO-SOVIET CAUSES IN RECENT YEARS. THE
NEW COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER, HARI BAHADUR BASNET, ALSO SERVED
IN PREVIOUS CABINETS AS MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH IT IS TOO EARLY TO ANALYZE THOROUGHLY
THE NEW CABINET IT STRIKES US THAT PRIME MINISTER TULSI GIRI
HAS ENHANCED HIS POWER. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE HE NO LONGER
HAS TO CONTEND WITH A POTENTIAL RIVAL, KHADGA BAHADUR SINGH,
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PAGE 03 KATHMA 02054 181126Z

WHO HAS NOW BEEN DROPPED FROM THE CABINET AS WELL AS FROM THE
CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE "BACK TO THE VILLAGE" CAMPAIGN" (REFTEL).
IN ADDITION, TWO OTHER ANTI-GIRI MINISTERS HAVE HAD THEIR
PORTFOLIOS REDUCED. MINISTER OF FINANCE THAPA HAS LOST HIS
ADDITIONAL FUNCTION IN CHARGE OF GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND
HARKA GURUNG HAS BEEN DROPPED AS MINISTER OF EDUCATION, COM-
MERCE AND INDUSTRY AND SHIFTED TO THE LESS IMPORTANT CHARGES
OF TOURISM AND TRANSPORT. PASHUPATI RANA'S ELEVATION

TO THE CABINET IS NOT SURPRISING, SINCE HE HAS LONG BEEN
TOUTED AS A POTENTIAL MINISTER IN VIEW OF HIS TECHNICAL
COMPETENCE AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PALACE.
IN GENERAL WE BELIEVE THE NEW CABINET TO BE MORE LIBERAL THAN
ITS PREDECESSOR. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE THE REMOVAL OF HARD-
LINER K.B. SINGH AND THE RETENTION AND APPARENT STRENGTHENING
OF TULSI GIRI WILL PROBABLY SIGNAL A GREATER WILLINGNESS ON
THE PART OF THE PALACE TO CONSIDER SOME CHANGES IN THE

ELECTION PROCEDURES. HARI BAHADUR BASNET, EDUCATED AT LUMUMBA UNIVERSITY IN MOSCOW, WOULD PROBABLY ALIGN HIMSELF WITH LIBERALS OVER ISSUE OF PANCHAYAT REFORMS. JOG MEHAR SHRESTHA IS ALSO LIBERAL, AND DESPITE BRITISH-EDUCATED PASHUPATI RANA'S OFTEN "ROYALIST RHETORIC" HE, TOO, WOULD PROBABLY FAVOR SOME LOOSENING UP OF THE PANCHAYAT SYSTEM.

5. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER ANALYSIS AND REACTION TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

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